

The **BLUE JAY**



BULLETIN
of the
SASKATCHEWAN NATURAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

In Co-operation with
The Saskatchewan Provincial Museum

THE BLUE JAY

Official publication of the

SASKATCHEWAN NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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The aim of this society is to continue and extend the work and ideas of the Founder of the "Blue Jay", the late Mrs. Isabel M. Priestly, in forming a medium for the exchange of nature observations of mutual interest, and in working together for the protection and conservation of the wild life of Saskatchewan.

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HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

The BLUE JAY is published quarterly at a yearly subscription rate of \$1.00. Anyone interested in any phase of nature will be a welcome member of this organization. All subscriptions will start and terminate on the first day of January. Those who have paid their subscriptions at the old rate will be credited with this amount as part payment on this year's subscription.

Will members please make special note that all material for the BLUE JAY should be sent to the Editor, at 1077 Garnet Street, Regina, and all subscriptions and business letters to Mr. William Whitehead, 2624 Angus Blvd., Regina.

Material for the next issue should
be submitted not later than Nov.15

THE EDITOR'S DESK

By the time this issue reaches your homes most of the birds, which gave us so much joy during the summer, will be winging their way to warmer climates and fresher, greener fields; the trees, dressed up for the occasion, will be shedding their leaves: other native animals will be storing away food supplies, or otherwise preparing for hibernation; the breezes from the north will be cool, and frost will be in the air.

All of these factors will remind us that the summer of 1949 is a thing of the past - leaving behind memories of restful vacations, pleasant trips and happy days spent in the open - of new and valued friends that we have made among our plants, birds and other creatures, because of a closer and more intimate acquaintance with them.

We hope that you have had an enjoyable summer, and at least a few days away from home, to lakes, woods or mountains, where a new and refreshing environment brought you closer to some of the innumerable treasures which nature always has in store for us.

For our part we spent an enjoyable week in the invigorating air of Cypress Hills - where much of the flora is of an alpine character; where Pink-sided Juncos joined with us at breakfast under the Lodgepole Pines; where raspberries were collected for the evening meal; where swimming and golf filled in the time between hikes along shaded paths and gurgling brooks. Incidentally we brought back 116 flower specimens to add to our herbarium.

Someone has said; "Curiosity, most active during infancy and adolescence, customarily repressed in most of us, is irrepressible in idiots, gossips and scientists." By no stretch of the imagination can we classify BLUE JAY subscribers as either idiots or gossips; therefore they must fall under the classification of scientists. That is correct. Naturalists are scientists; they are curious about everything around them: they are never satisfied; no sooner is one question answered than they turn their attention to new interests. Theirs is the spirit of discovery; the mental force which drives them to increasing observation and investigation.

But a true scientist, and therefore an enthusiastic naturalist, is endowed with another commendable trait - he writes down his observations so that others might benefit by his experience and feel something of the thrill that was his at the time of discovery.

That is our whole point. So many of you see so many interesting things in Nature, and then fail to tell the rest of us about them. Issue after issue, the same faithful few, whose names long ago have become familiar to you, do their part - and more. Our thanks goes out to them, for they have made the BLUE JAY what it is today. But an opportunity is opened, and an invitation is extended to every subscriber to be also a partner and contributor - a contributor, not merely of lists and dates and cold facts, but of those little stories which our wild life tells us again and again, but always in a different way.

OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS



Do you ne'er think what wondrous beings these?
Do you ne'er think who made them, and who taught
The dialect they speak, where melodies
Alone are the interpreters of thought?
Whose household words are songs in many keys,
Sweeter than instruments of man e'er caught!
Whose habitations in the tree tops even
Are halfway houses on the road to heaven!

--- Longfellow

ITUNA -- B. M. Rayner

There is no more interesting way to study the habits and peculiarities of birds; to enjoy their refreshing songs in the morning and to make what is felt to be an intimate acquaintance with our feathered friends than to encourage them to build their nests and rear their young around the home yard and garden.

Mr. Rayner is one such enthusiast; for a Brewer's Blackbird, a Cedar Waxwing, a Yellow Warbler, a Catbird, a Kingbird, a Baltimore Oriole and several Robins have all successfully raised a family, this summer, around his home. A pair of Kingbirds returned for the third successive year. They occupied a shelf-type box fastened to a tree which originally had been made for robins. This spring, undaunted by the fact that the old nest had not been cleaned out, she built a new one on top of it and settled down as before. On July 7 she was still incubating her eggs. Twenty-five feet away a Baltimore Oriole, undisturbed by the presence of the Kingbird, hung her nest and established a home. Without any sign of friction the four birds concerned went about their business, their industry and attentiveness bringing an inner sense of happiness to Mr. Rayner and his family.

PUNNICHY -- Madeline B. Runyan

And then we have the interesting experience of Mrs. Runyan. For weeks, this summer, she had the thrill of watching Hummingbirds as they sipped diluted honey from two small bottles just outside her kitchen window. Feeling sorry for the little Hummers, as they repeatedly tried to reach her flowering house-plants through the window-glass, she made two artificial flowers for them, in mauve and red, with little phials of honey solution in the centre of each, fastened with bands of adhesive tape.

The "fairy" birds were there from morning until night, and Mrs. Runyan often stood perfectly still within two feet of them. Although each bottle held about 5 c.c. of syrup, the birds did not fail to empty both each day.

REGINA -- L. T. Carmichael

The tamest and most interesting birds with which we have made intimate acquaintance are Tree Swallows. For more than a month we watched them as they courted, built their nest and reared their young in a birdhouse on a tree only a few feet from the windows of our breakfast nook.

Perhaps the most remarkable fact was that there was a triangular love affair - two males and one female. One of the males, no doubt, had lost its mate and joined in with the other pair to pass an otherwise miserable summer

in a pleasant fashion. His vigil was from an electric light wire, about ten feet from the nest, while his successful rival stood guard on a twig about a foot from the door of the house.

Several times each day they would chase each other around the house and up and down the street, only to return again and preen their iridescent plumage in the sunlight, from their accustomed vantage points. Both males assisted in building the nest, although the stranger first appeared after most of the work was done. Both brought insects that they caught in the air, to the young. The guilty suitor sometimes had a hard time of it, and was not only rudely driven out of the nest by the female, but was given an extra chase around the trees by the irate legitimate mate. At other times she seemed unconcerned and apparently welcomed the attentions of both as they assisted her with the daily chores.

The birds were very tame and would merely look down in a friendly manner as the hand was brought within half an inch of them. We never attempted to touch or catch them, but either would have been easy.

Both of the males and the female had a great fascination for pigeon feathers. After taking a rapid and graceful circular tour they would approach the opening rapidly, hoping that the force of the impact would be great enough to bend the feather, which would almost always strike crosswise with the hole. Time after time they would make the approach with the same feather; sometimes they would be lucky and get it in endwise, but often they would fail; the feather would fall to the ground; they would give up in despair and sit on their perches, pondering over the stubbornness of feathers in general. At this point we came to the rescue several times and standing on tip-toe would hold the feather up to the entrance. The female watching, with head hanging out, would gently pull it in and then thrust out its head again - its gleaming eyes asking for more.

Swallows have their own troubles. A wren started to nest in a neighboring birdhouse and immediately busied itself by stealing the already gathered material from the swallow's nest. We had to put an end to that, so closed the hole to the wren's nest and let it seek another home in an area, where it would have to work for a living (we hoped).

When we left home for our holidays we felt sorry that we would not have an opportunity of watching the three young swallows take their first plunge from the tree to the lawn below, and to study the attentiveness of their parents and foster parent. But the houses will be ready for them again next summer, and we will look forward to their return and companionship.

HAWARDEN -- Harold Kvinge

A grove of trees and a pond of water on the open prairie are like an oasis to many birds of the West. Ignoring the forests and the many wooded coulees along the valleys, they wing their way across the open and flat prairies to some artificial windbreak, one edge of which perhaps, is mirrored in a pond or dugout.

Year after year, as Mr. Ward of Burnam has ample proof, they raise their young and return again. It is the home of their choice, their summer resort, a mere speck on the boundless and treeless plains around them - but they love it, just as those, who till the soil about, are bound by a fascination that not even a Westerner can explain.

Such is the case around the farmstead of Mr. Kvinge. This summer many old friends and newcomers nested in his groves around the edge of the pond and on the adjacent prairie. There were Arkansas and Common Kingbirds; Barn and Cliff swallows; Brewer's and Red-winged Blackbirds; Hungarian Partridge and Sharp-tailed Grouse; Mallards and Willets and Marbled Godwits; Baltimore Orioles, Yellow Warblers and House Wrens. Catbirds nested there in company with Black-billed Cuckoos and White-rumped Shrikes; Killdeer and Avocets reared their young; while young crows looked out over the prairie from their nest on top of the highest tree watching the "baby" Burrowing Owls as they peered from a hole in the bank - wide-eyed at a new and inviting world. On August 10th one Hungarian Partridge hatched out twenty young and another pair, fifteen. A day before this a new covey of fourteen Sharp-tailed Grouse made their first acquaintance with the prairie.

Those of us who live in towns and cities, highly prize the very few species that make their homes in our back yards. What a thrill it would be to have visitors and nests galore!

R.R.2, REGINA -- Doug Gilroy

Our readers always enjoy interesting facts and accounts of unusual activities, observed among our feathered and other animal friends. If all members of this Society would jot down these personal observations and submit them for publication in the BLUE JAY we would have a nature magazine second to none in Canada. Will each reader take the cue from those who have so generously contributed this time, and help to bring our next issue nearer to our ideal.

We are very fortunate in getting this description from Mr. Gilroy of the gull colonies of Last Mountain Lake.

"Last May 30, Mr. Fred Bard, Director of our provincial museum, was making one of his field trips to Imperial Beach and invited me to come along to try my luck in photographing the Ring-billed Gulls and Pelicans. For this opportunity I was more than grateful. Fred Lahrman, Mr. Bard's assistant, had already been there camping and was observing the wild life for the previous ten days or so.

The gull colony, which consisted of both Ring-billed and California, was on an island not far from shore. This was indeed a sight to behold for we estimated there to be between 1800 and 2000 nests in this one group. One had to be careful where he put his feet for fear of stepping on the eggs. I was stationed here while the other two went down the lake to observe the pelican colonies and to band the young. Getting pictures of the gulls was anything but difficult. There were so many of them, and the urge to incubate their eggs was so strong that all one had to do was to sit still among the nests and the owners would soon gather around, screaming and yelling at each other as each settled on her individual nest.

Each nest was very jealously guarded by its owner, and if a neighbor came a bit too close he was fiercely lunged at. The eggs, about the size of a pullet's, were dark and speckled. Two or three eggs made a clutch and were laid in a bed of sea-weed on the sand.

That evening, when back on the beach eating supper, we could hear the gulls screaming and clamoring and we all agreed that it sounded for all the world like a girls' softball game. We stayed at the beach for another day and a half, but due to high winds and rough water we were unable to get out to the islands, and so photography for this trip was over.

Black-billed Cuckoos

Mr. Gilroy attributes the large number of Black-billed Cuckoos, which appeared in his district during June and July, to the prevalence of Tent Caterpillars in the same area. Did this condition prevail in other parts of the province?

He was fortunate in finding three Bittern nests this summer. One of them had three eggs in it and each of the other two, five.

The "Doggiest" Nest

"Near the end of June," writes Mr. Gilroy, "our dog began to shed his hair. It clung to him like matted wool, so one day I curried it out. The same day an Arkansas Kingbird began to build its nest in a tree beside the house. In a very short time it spied the curried dog-wool --- and that is what most of its nest was made of. Several other birds nested nearby, but Mrs. Kingbird had the "doggiest" nest in the yard."

Horned Larks

"The Horned Larks are one of the first birds to nest in the spring, but how late do they nest? On July 19 I found two nests, one with five young about a week old and the other with four eggs; then on July 24 I found another nest with four eggs.

(We hope that others will tell us their observations in this respect. ED.)

NAICAM - W. Yanchinski

Lingering to bid a welcome to newcomers, Lapland Longspurs first appeared in this district May 18. Two days later an estimated 100 to 200 were seen in flocks preparing to take off for the north and their nesting grounds. That was the same day that Barn Swallows were first noted. They appeared daily and on June 27 a pair nested in my granary. A week later the swallow abandoned this site - House Sparrows filled the nest with twigs and other trash.

The first Nighthawk was seen on the woodpile on the morning of May 20. On August 14 a flock of about a dozen flew about over a nearby pond. The Catbird was first heard May 20 and was seen almost daily. A pair nested near the house. Other birds which visited the district were: House Wren, May 19; American Finch, May 22; Black-capped Chickadee, May 29; Sharp-tailed Grouse, nest found in the combine straw, May 29; Least Flycatcher appeared first May 13 and a nest was found June 12; Baltimore Oriole, May 18; Cedar Waxwing, May 27; Vesper Sparrow, May 16; Yellow-headed Blackbird, June 17; White Pelican, June 29; Black Tern, June 30; American Bittern, May 20.

A family of Ruffed Grouse, including about half a dozen half-grown birds, comes almost daily to within a few paces of the house to feed on their favorite weeds.

BURNHAM -- Arthur Ward

Mr. Ward is one of our most enthusiastic observers of bird life. His keen interest has been developed by his remarkable success in bird banding. There seems no doubt that if more of us would develop this fascinating hobby, our knowledge of birds and the pleasure we would derive from observing them

would be increased beyond measure. His interesting reports follow:

The May Frost

The severe frost that destroyed all fruit on May 22, also took a tragic toll of bird eggs. I found some nests with eggs deserted and other nests, which were known to have contained eggs, were missing. The leaves of the trees were gone, making it difficult for the birds to find the usual suitable places.

Cowbirds Take Over

Redwing Blackbirds usually build in small congregations of five or six pairs. It was these I examined first. Their nests had a paper, rag and string foundation, lined with root fibre. One of these contained three cowbird eggs and three of its own; the others had one cowbird egg in each. In spite of the fact that I took out the intruders' eggs, the next visit revealed that the blackbirds had given up the site and left it to the cowbirds.

It was evident that these birds had taken over our little bird sanctuary. On approaching a wren box I noticed one trying desperately to find a way into the box; it would poke its head into the small hole, then go around pecking at the sides, trying to pry the lid off. Finally it gave up. We had to shoot three cowbirds to give the other birds a chance to start housekeeping.

Our Yellow Warbler

I have an arbour in the garden, glassed all round, which I use for an office. From there, I do the bird-trapping observations. A Virginia Creeper grows thickly around, covering the glass. A Yellow Warbler built its nest six inches from the glass in the creeper, enabling me to watch every movement. A cowbird added its eggs to the first warbler eggs. I took out the cowbird's egg and next morning there were two warbler eggs. By noon one of these was missing and next morning, expecting two warbler eggs, there was just the one cowbird egg. It would seem that the cowbird had ejected the warbler eggs. I now disposed of the cowbird and its eggs, hoping that the warbler would commence to lay again - which it did after two days. The first was laid June 21st and on the fourth three days later. On July 4th the last one was hatched, just thirteen days after the last one was laid. After the first egg was hatched incubation seemed to take care of itself; the temperature at that time was about 80 degrees.

I did not see the male bird feed the female, but the latter left the nest for a short spell each day. Both parents carried food, consisting of grasshoppers - one to each bird. If it was extra large they would first push it down the throats of three, as if to soften it up, then finally give it to the fourth. Sometimes one parent would bring food in the form of pellets which were distributed evenly. Each parent, after feeding, would hesitate until one of the young ones would raise its hindquarters, even if it had to struggle from beneath. The parent would then take the excrement without its touching the nest and carry it away. Sometimes there would be no need but it always waited a moment to see. The most the young were fed was seven times in ten minutes, but the rate varied from time to time.

On the second day they could take a full-sized cutworm moth with legs and wings. It would be pushed head first well down their throats. On the fourth day pin-feathers were formed and they rested their heads on the side of the nest. On the night of the fifth day, just before dark, I was doing some

repairing inside the arbour which required some hammering. Unfortunately, I did not look to see how they had taken it. Next morning the nest was empty and they could not be found. Evidently the noise had caused them to jump out of the nest. I was very disappointed in not being able to follow them through until they were fully fledged.

A few days after, I examined the nest and found that they had built one above the other. Expecting to find a cowbird egg to be the cause of this, I was surprised to find a warbler egg in the bottom of the nest. In the first laying, three eggs only had been accounted for. This must have been done before I discovered the nest in the first place.

Incidentally, I had banded both of the warbler parents previous to their nesting.

Hyhfield Dam

A visit to this irrigation project covering 1200 acres, six miles east of us, revealed that where the water level had been kept for the last few years, a fringe of trees about eight feet tall was occupying the shore line. The water level has now been raised, leaving the trees about thirty yards from shore.

Many kinds of water-bird nests were observed along the fringe, including: Eared Grebe, American Coot, Avocet, Long-billed Curlew, Willets (I banded four of these), and Sora Rails. Nearly every kind of shore-bird was there, including four Great Blue Herons, 10,000 ducks and 500 Herring Gulls.

Having no boat, we were not able to take advantage of what would have been an interesting study. Here again we encountered the cowbird. A small colony of Redwing Blackbirds had left the cowbird eggs waiting for a sitter. If the cowbird does any good, it is greatly offset by the damage it does and should be put in the same class as the Magpie. Just imagine in a bird sanctuary, like ours, a small bird rearing a cowbird instead of, probably, two broods of its own. A Magpie does announce its presence, but the cowbird sneaks up to one's doorstep without anyone knowing, and plies its nefarious trade.

Bird Banding

Two pairs of Arkansas Kingbirds nested in the sanctuary this summer. Two nestlings, just ready to fly were banded. Five pairs of Kingbirds (Tyrannus) nested and I banded two of these which I caught in a trap. This is very unusual as it is extremely difficult to induce them to enter a trap. Twenty-six cowbirds were banded, twenty-three of which were adults. However, only three of their nests were found here. We do not allow the Shrike in our little sanctuary, but greatly to my surprise one followed a yellow warbler to a trap and tore its head off before I could get to it.

This year, 286 birds of 32 species have been banded. Those birds not having been banded here before are:

- 1 Yellow-breasted Chat
- 2 female Baltimore Orioles
- 1 Yellow-throated Warbler
- 1 Western Flycatcher
- 1 Townsends Solitaire.

SASKATOON -- A. McPherson

Following on with his splendid report, which appeared in our last issue, Mr. McPherson has given us a comprehensive over-all picture of bird life in Saskatoon and its immediate district. Like Mr. Ward, Mr. Street, Mr. Bard, Mr. Houston and others, his interest has been keenly sharpened by his bird-banding operations.

The Nesting Season

"Around Saskatoon we have not a great many birds to choose from. At the Hudson Bay Slough (the only body of water except the Saskatchewan River, we have close to the city) - the mallard population was good, a big increase over last year. Of the many broods that hatched, they were all up from seven to fourteen, with the exception of one or two. Pintails were scarce but more were around than last year. Three years ago they were very plentiful; this year three broods only were found. Their scarcity is probably due to the lack of water in pot-holes and sloughs. Blue-winged Teal are on the increase. So far I have noticed fairly large broods. In numbers Bald-pates are next to Mallards this year. They are numerous at the Slough, but the broods are rather small - from four to seven.

This year we have two broods of Canvas-backs; one with four and the other with seven. I have only seen one brood of Ruddy's, although there are quite a few pair on the Slough. There are also several pair of Lesser Scaups and two pair of Gadwalls, but, as with the scaups, no broods have been seen. Coots are more prevalent than last year and quite a number of these have nested.

This spring I was obliged to shift my duck trap. I picked a spot close beside a Coot's nest which had nine eggs in it. I'm sure the pair of them didn't like the idea at all. Everything turned out all right, however, for they all hatched - but many a time they "told me plenty".

Two pair of Horned Grebes, and two pair of Pied-billed Grebes were also found with young. The Black Tern population was larger this year but I cannot give any reason for this. In one instance I found two females who seemed to be using the same nest. Many of the nests have several eggs.

Sora Rails were on the increase; Red-winged Blackbirds were about the same; Savannah Sparrows were not so plentiful as early observations indicated. The Arkansas Kingbird is on the increase; I have listed several pairs in town. I came across several of their nests and noticed that most of them hatched out only one bird. I do not know if this is a common habit or not.

This year I trapped nearly a hundred robins as compared with twenty last year. This increase may be due to the difference in some of my bird traps. Catbirds, Brown Thrashers, Clay-coloured Sparrows, Flickers and Hungarian Partridge seem to be scarce this year. Grackles, Brewer's Blackbirds, Vesper Sparrows, House Wrens, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Meadowlarks, Orioles, Barn, Bank and Tree Swallows, all have appeared in about their usual numbers. Killdeer Plovers and Yellow Warblers are unusually common.

On July 10th I saw quite a number of Lesser Yellow-legs, these being the first immigrants on their way south. Ten days later I saw Dowitchers and Wilson's Phalaropes, Least Sandpipers and Semi-palmated Sandpipers. On the 25th of July I noticed several Greater Yellow-legs, Marbled Godwits and Western Willets, all moving south. I have also noticed the following in migration,

several of which I have banded: Song Sparrows, House Wrens, Lincoln Sparrows, Flickers, Chipping Sparrows and Robins.

WAUCHOPE -- Marion Nixon

The bird population, low last winter, was even lower this summer. There were fewer birds per species rather than fewer species. We thought the last snow of spring might be the cause of fewer birds then, but there were fewer birds later on too. I tried to shoot magpies in the shelterbelt, hoping this would help the situation. My son shot the five young as they were getting restless in the nest. This caused the adults to move.

We have had Cedar Waxwings nesting about a quarter of a mile from the house this year, but lately they moved to the farmyard with their young. I am told they nest up Moose Mountain way every year but this is the first time we have noted them during mating season.

GRENFELL -- Mrs. John Hubbard, Jr.

Vandalism

In our last issue Judge McKim, of Melfort, and Clifford Shaw, of Yorkton, told of the prevalence of Red-tailed Hawks in their respective districts. These items reminded Mrs. Hubbard of a case of their wilful destruction on their farm.

"My husband reports a rather far-fetched piece of vandalism", she writes. "Last year, when harvesting, he threw a fallen tree out of the crop. It was a tree that shortly before had had a Red-tail's nest with young in it. An examination of the stump this spring showed that the tree had been cut down with an axe. Some "bird lover", in his attempt to destroy a beneficial bird, had gone on someone else's land, cut down a tree, and left that tree where it would be in the road of field work".

A Near Tragedy

"Another bird story concerns a Bluebird who survived having a bin turned completely over on him in a recent storm. Mr. George Hubbard saw his animate tail sticking out from beneath the bin's roof and dug away some loose earth. --- The Bluebird flew away".

An annual meeting will be held in Regina College and in the Provincial Museum of Natural History on October 21 and 22, 1949. Wildlife films will be shown and the whole make-up and policy of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society and the "BLUE JAY" will be discussed. More complete programs may be obtained upon inquiry. Please let us know if you can come to Regina for these days.

TORCH RIVER -- C. Stuart Francis

We saw the first Bobolink to be recorded in the Torch River district recently and I am wondering if this is a northern record for them. Also

reappearing this spring were the Catbird, Brown Thrasher and Baltimore Oriole, which are some of the more recent residents in this northern area.

My pair of Canada Geese have a fine family of five young goslings. Only five eggs were laid and all hatched on May 29.

REGINA -- Clara A. Taylor

Many nature lovers are the first to confess that their present interest in the habits, oddities and characteristics of wild life is not an inherited but an acquired attitude. The hobby is developed due to a close association with others whose interests are bent in that direction. It is a contagious pastime so often shared by every member of the family.

Such a nature fan is Mrs. Taylor, whose husband, Jack, never misses an opportunity to greet an unfamiliar bird or to welcome a newcomer. With an uncanny exactness he can identify it a "mile" away. Unconsciously his enthusiasm becomes the common property of those about, one of whom is nearly always Mrs. Taylor. She writes:

"While sitting in the car in the 2300 block Hamilton Street a couple of weeks ago (June 23), I saw a pair of Bronze Grackles on the grass quite near the pavement, feeding a young bird. There was very little traffic at the time and I was able to observe quite plainly. The male seemed to me to be doing most of the feeding. While he was away getting more food, the young bird had moved a couple of feet away on the grass and stood quite near the pavement and facing it. He would have had to stand in front of it and on the pavement which, of course, must have been hot. Instead of doing that, he stood on the grass beside the young one and pushed it two or three times with one foot until it moved into a suitable position to be fed.

It really was most unbelievable and had I heard of it instead of actually seeing it, I might have thought it fantastic".

BLADWORTH -- P. Lawrence Beckie

Bank Swallows

An interesting observation I made on July 22, gave me a pleasant surprise. While hauling gravel I discovered a colony of Bank Swallows, nesting in the walls of the pit. The pit is dug in the south side of a large hill which forms a part of a chain of hills on the east bank of Arm River.

The soil at the top of the pit is clay-sand and very easy to dig. The colony dug their homes a few inches to three feet from the top. There are many holes along the top but all are not occupied. The holes are oblong, being about one and a half by two inches wide. I counted twelve birds flying about the hills.

This may be a common sight to some observers but to me it was a new discovery in Nature.

(Some more descriptions would prove of interest to those who have not seen these colonies. ED.)

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In our last issue Mr. Coates of Leask, and Miss P. Summers of Yorkton, each described a bird with which they were not familiar. Mr. Beckie has hazarded an opinion. He wonders if the bird at Leask could possibly be the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, although aware of the fact that the bird is of rare

occurrence in Canada. The bird, referred to by Miss Summers, he believes is the Harris Sparrow. He has heard their song, similar to the one described, during spring migration.

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SHEHO -- William Niven

Just after we had gone to press last time a letter was received from Mr. Niven, giving a full account of the spring bird migrations from March 4 to June 12. Over a hundred birds were listed as they first appeared, together with interesting comparative notes about their prevalence, unusual times of arrival and early nesting records. It is the most complete account of bird arrivals that we have received and our congratulations are extended to a keen and observant Naturalist. Unfortunately we will be unable to publish this list. There are a few facts, however, that we should mention.

From April 25 to May 1, large flocks of Horned Larks passed through Sheho which seemed quite different from the resident birds. They were redder on the back, had black faces and their chest markings were not so distinct. They were a slightly smaller bird than the ordinary species and no horns were noticed. Mr. Niven is of the opinion that they were a northern race in migration. (Comments from Taverner appear below.)

The first Horned Lark's nest, with four eggs, was seen on April 16 and the young were hatched before the end of the month. (There is a long time from this date to the last hatching, reported by Mr. Gilroy, during the first week in August.) The Canada Geese and Mallards also nested very early. A nest of the former with seven eggs was found near Salt Lake May 1, and one of the latter with ten eggs, the next day. The House Wren and Palm Warbler appeared on the scene May 4. These are also early records. (Mrs. Runyan, of Punnichy reported seeing the first House Wren this spring on May 7.)

An American Osprey was seen May 10, flying low in a northward direction. This is the first certain record for this species at Sheho. The myriads of Franklin Gulls in August would indicate that they came to us in increased numbers this year, but Mr. Niven is the first to report that fact. Unusually large flocks in migration were seen June 1.

HORNED LARKS

Taverner has this to say about these birds: "Few birds have been divided into as many, or as puzzling, sub-species as the Horned Lark. In Canada we have a northern and southern series of sub-species distributed across the continent, the northern ones being, in each case slightly but consistently larger than the southern neighbors. Across the more southerly parts of Ontario and Quebec we have the Prairie Horned Lark, extending westward into Manitoba. West of the range of the Prairie Horned Lark is the Desert Horned Lark, of the same size as the latter, but decidedly paler, the vinaceous of the upper parts is reduced to pinkish, and the brown back stripings are largely concealed with greyish. This form occupies most of our central prairies and southward. Some authorities divide this into two races, the northern of which enters Canada and is known as the Saskatchewan Horned Lark, but it has not been accepted in the check list. North along the central Arctic coast and extending eastward in the islands above, is Hoyt's Horned Lark. It approximates

the large Eastern Lark in size, but the forehead, eyebrows and face are white. The throat may be pale yellow or white. In summer, the body colors are bright and contrastive, with much strong ruddy. It migrates through the Prairie Provinces. At higher elevations through British Columbia and lower in the Yukon and Alaska, is the Pallid Horned Lark. It is another large race, paler than the Prairie or Hoyt's, but darker than the Desert. The throat is always white. It migrates throughout the prairies, perhaps as far east as Manitoba. East of the Coast range in southern British Columbia the Streaked Horned Lark may be found. It is the smallest of our Canadian Horned Larks and the darkest and reddest in color, with underparts usually showing faintly yellow below and black gorget.

The differences between some of these races is not very marked and even the expert must have an ample series of specimens for comparison before making decisive identification."

Take your choice, Mr. Niven.

REGINA -- Elizabeth Barker

Fall Migrations

The following is a report to August 14 of bird migrations as observed at my home at 3035 Argyle St., along with other observations of general interest:

Blackbirds, as usual the first to move, passed overhead in mid-July. On the last day of that month 26 Black Terns were noted; later these were seen in large numbers on Wascana Lake. On August 1, Horned Larks were beginning to assemble in flocks. On August 14 a flock of twenty were seen in the city. On August 8, Meadowlarks were beginning to fly around and indulge in early morning gymnastics with one another and on that same day Barn Swallows congregated in small groups, one of which sat on the wires over my door. The first Franklin gulls seen since July 20 appeared in flocks on August 11, coming in from the south-west and going south-east. This flock, numbering perhaps two hundred or more birds turned back and whirled upwards and away toward the west, showing up like a flock of sparkling stars in the sky. I think possibly they were feeding on grasshoppers, as these insects were in flight that day.

On August the first, small flocks of Robins, gathering together for their southern trip, were seen across the street on light wires. Two weeks later came the crowning flock around my door at 7.30 in the morning. There were fifty or more birds, all of them young, with speckled breasts. Their presence was strongly resented by the other birds in whose summer area they were intruding. First came the Meadowlark down among them, in true helicopter style, direct from above. He drew himself up and began to threaten with his spear-like bill. Next came the Kingbirds and gave every robin which they could persuade to fly a real good chase. Just at this time a pair of Orioles came into my maple tree in the front yard searching for insects. As they left the tree and rested for a moment on the light wire they were attacked and driven away by the Arkansas Kingbird.

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Miss Barker also reports that the following birds nested around her city home and yard this summer: three Meadowlarks in the shelter of the house

in two separate broods; one Chestnut-collared Longspur; one Clay-coloured Sparrow and four Barn Swallows. Young Orioles were observed in a nearby tree on July 28.

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MORE REPORTS FROM BURNHAM

Just before going to press we received some further interesting notes from Mr. Arthur Warf. His enthusiasm for birds always remains at a high pitch.

"There has been an unusual visitation of immature Clay-coloured Sparrows here. A few had been trapped before July, but later they became very numerous and I have banded 120. Now, I am turning them loose without bands. Every time I look towards the traps there are three or four in each and several outside. I have turned scores away. Strange to say, there are no adults.

There are also a great many Yellow Warblers. I had not banded more than six on other occasions, but I have banded forty this year. Like the Clay-coloured Sparrows, they are not repeating.

There are no signs of migration yet (August 25), except one Red-breasted Nuthatch, one immature Magnolia Warbler and one Townsend's Solitaire. These I have banded. In all, up to this date I have banded 436 birds of 33 species."

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An Unlucky Flicker

Merele Wershler, a member of the Simpson public school Nature Club at Yorkton, reports that on August 23 he saw a Blue Jay swoop down to the lawn where a Flicker was feeding. The Blue Jay struck the Flicker in the breast, knocked the victim over and flew away with him.

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We are very sorry to learn that one of our faithful contributors and bird enthusiast, Stuart Houston, has been laid up with a crippled knee this summer.

After five weeks of discomfort an operation was performed on it in Winnipeg, August 13th. Stuart writes that he is making a good recovery and hopes to be about on crutches before the end of August. He has been given the assurance that he will be walking without support when Medical College resumes again on September 12th. The BLUE JAY wishes him a speedy and thorough recovery.

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"Ponds are great crystals on the surface of the earth. Lakes of light. If they were congealed and small enough to be clutched they would be carried off like precious stones; but being liquid and ample, secured to us and our successors, forever, we disregard them. How much more beautiful than our lives; how much more transparent than our characters. Nature has no human inhabitant who appreciates her. Talk of heaven! Ye disgrace earth!"

--- Henry Thoreau

MAMMAL SECTION

SKUNKS AT PLAY

Elizabeth B.
Flock, Regina.



Seldom do city people have the opportunity to watch the playful antics of young wild animals. All too often, the first sight or scent of man send them scurrying in terror out of sight. So it was with pleasure that we welcomed the invitation of friends to visit a family of half-grown skunks they had seen playing the previous evening.

Their home was dug into the bank below the road level where tall grasses screened the entrance. From our vantage point just above them, we had a perfect view. Slightly before sunset one of the parents entered the den not to be seen again. About the same time two young emerged from a wheat field to cross the intervening grassy area leading home. They proceeded sedately in single file, their plumed tails waving gracefully.

All was quiet for a time until one emerged to follow a winding path down to the edge of a pool, the sole remnant of a stream that flowed under the bridge later to empty into Wascana creek. There he slaked his thirst with a long drink of water. Once when a forepaw went through the scum of plant life, he drew it out quickly to shake off the water. Shortly, a second one followed the exact course of the first to the same spot for a drink. A little later the third and smallest took the identical route of the others for his evening drink.

Thus revived, the two smaller skunks promptly engaged in a rough and tumble rollick like a couple of kittens. Soon one was on its back waving both front feet in the air. If one walked away the other sidled up and nipped it repeatedly for all the world like a small boy cuffing another into combat. Occasionally, they would sense something on the road in our direction and pause with heads thrown back to sniff the air while their tails went up at the same time. Reassured that all was well, they would tangle once more and roll about or work off their excess energy by digging frantically for a minute only to stop and turn to some fresh form of amusement. Meanwhile, cars passed back and forth each one shaking the bridge, but they were unheeded by the skunks while none of the passengers seemed sufficiently curious to see what was attracting our attention.

The third and largest skunk was less interested in play than the smaller ones, but much more interested in food. With nose close to the ground he was on the move in search of nourishment, around the pool, under the bridge, down to the former streambed, up again through the grass where only the white stripes on the back showed level with the grass tops. He worked farther and farther afield, stopping now and then to nab some grasshopper or other insect.

So we left them in the early darkness, one venturing alone into the world, the other two still rollicking together close to the home den until they, too, might feel the pangs of hunger sufficiently to go foraging.

COYOTES

Mrs. Carl Runyan reports that the coyotes played havoc among the lambs at Punnichy, this summer. The farmers there will be forced to give up turkey raising unless provision is made to confine the birds in wire pens.

At Grenfell, also, Mrs. John Hubbard reports that they are coming right into yards and picking up hens and chickens.

More reports of the extensive damage being done by coyotes have been received from different sections of the province. Marion Nixon makes the following observations of conditions in the Wauchope district.

"In this district we have no rabbits, practically no gophers, fewer ground-nesting songbirds than for years and there is hardly any comeback in grouse since the drop two years ago which was due to blizzards and floods.

At the same time, lamb losses and turkey losses were just as heavy while the small rodents were numerous. I do not believe in the rogue theory of coyote killers. Our experience teaches that coyote pups are given a course in lamb culture as part of their late summer training.

I have read many accounts that conclude that coyotes thrive on domestic environment, and seek to thrive on civilization. Surely, then, we are justified in combatting them.

JUMPING MICE

Mr. W. Yanchinski, is of the opinion that the Granlands Jumping Mouse is quite common in the Naicam district, particularly within close proximity to the water courses. He first saw one on May 27th and has since come upon three other individuals at different points.

CHIPMUNK

A Western Chipmunk has made his home in a woodpile near Mr. Yanchinski's house. Other individuals have been reported regularly at two other points in the Naicam district.

GROUND-HOG

Mrs. John Hubbard reports that ground-hogs are very plentiful in the Grenfell district this year. One moved into a stonepile beside her already ravaged garden, and after trying out peas, broccoli, cabbage, etc. ate one row of leaf lettuce and all of the head lettuce. Before he could finish the rest of the garden Mr. Hubbard intervened -- and the ground-hog appeared no more.

Any grasshoppers, Mrs. Hubbard?

BEAVER

"On my recent trip to Fishing Lakes and the Narrow Hills," writes Mr. C. Stuart Francis, "I could not help but observe the great increase in the beaver population. Twenty years ago, on a trip over the same road, only one colony of beaver could be found adjacent to the road and lakes; now every stretch, river, creek, muskeg, lake or slough has its colony. Beaver have cut down quite a number of Aspen Poplar right on the main beach at Fishing Lakes."

Speaking about beavers: have you read of the grain-eating variety that are adding to the worries of the farmer in the Moose Jaw district?

Game Warden Ted Smith reported that about 20 of these animals have been eating the crops just north of the village of Tilney. The animals have been chewing stems of Durham wheat on Mr. Strandlie's three-quarter section farm. The beavers nip off the wheat stems and carry the plants away to their homes near the banks of the Moose Jaw River. Hundreds of wheat straws have been found on the river banks. The animals had apparently eaten the wheat heads and left the straw.

A Moose Jaw district trapper was called to the rescue and trapped five of the flat-tailed animals. They were shipped to northern Saskatchewan. Another trapping expedition was planned to try to rid Mr. Strandlie of his wheat thieves. It is believed there are another fifteen beavers of the wheat-eating variety in the area.

....The Leader Post

Mrs. Marion Nixon tells that there has been a beaver lodge in a large slough, about three miles from Wauchope, the last three years.

"The slough is long and narrow rather than pothole in shape, and is so deep that horses driven home will try to ford it and find that they have to swim. There are several smaller sloughs close by, and the beavers have made ditches between whether to raise the level in their slough or to float logs, I do not know. Both explanations have been given me, but I have not watched construction proceedings myself. Where there had been a ditch it is now plugged.

A man drawing hay across, dug out the plug to drain off the water so his road would be better, and when he returned found it fast plugged again. I am told there are at least 14 beaver in the colony, both big and half grown. I have had no report of wee ones. This area is well posted with conservation signs."

TIMBER WOLVES

G.W. Carmichael, one of our subscribers from Eastern Canada, who now lives in Montreal, writes that he is very interested in the animal and bird stories of Saskatchewan. Some of the locations mentioned bring back to his mind many hunting and fishing trips during the years when he taught school in the Tisdale district.

"Last week," he writes, "while on a fishing trip north-east of Quebec City I coaxed my guide to paddle the canoe to within twenty-five feet of a bull moose, feeding in six feet of water. When he went down for lily roots he was completely submerged and stayed under for long periods. With horns in the velvet, he made a pretty sight and did not appear to be a bit concerned until we had approached to within a fly-cast. He then turned, waded out and stood in the fringe of the woods, watching us calmly."

BEARS

Damage caused by bears is increasing in the Endeavour district. Ed Hovey who resides seven miles west of the hamlet had his bee hives raided by a bear and lost all his honey as well as having the hives totally destroyed. In the same district John Tatarzyn lost a pig and placed another one in the barn for safety. The bear, however, forced his way in and ate the second porker. A bear, recently shot by Henry Beckman, measured ten feet in length.

Bears - big ones - created quite a furore in the Tisdale district during the last week in August.

Stephen Syniuk and Michael Klack, of Brooksby, saw a giant 700 pounder while they were stooking. It was crossing a field towards a pasture where Mike's eight-year-old brother was hunting cows. They jumped into their car and went to the house for the only weapons they owned - a shotgun and a pitchfork - returning hurriedly to get the bear and save the boy.

When they encountered the bear Mike took aim and got it right in the face, between the eyes. The bear charged and knocked Mike down. Steve grabbed the gun and got the bear in the shoulder. Then he was the object of the bear's attack. The pitchfork lost a tine in the back of the bear when Steve tried to get him off of Mike, only to be mauled nearly to the point of not being able to move.

The attack only tended to enrage the animal who chewed and boxed the men to the point of utter exhaustion. Steve, badly wounded and bleeding profusely wandered to the edge of the bush and collapsed. Mike, then remembered that he had heard a bear will leave a dead man alone so he lay as if dead and the bear went away. He was too far gone to fight any more anyway. Help finally came when neighbors heard the men's shouts a half a mile away. They were rushed to the Tisdale St. Theresa Hospital, suffering gashes and lacerations.

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On August 26, J. Greaves, of the Berlin district, heard a commotion in his pig-pen, late at night. He found his pig-pen partially torn down and heard his big sow squealing across the yard. He took the tractor for light and found the sow dying about 200 yards from the pen, where a bear had carried it, as there was no mark of a drag. He then called his neighbors at about 4.30 a.m. Saturday. They found the sow had been dragged further in, so they started a drive through the bluff around the house and about 9 o'clock drove out a huge black bear which fell to the aim of A. Abrahamson. The bear weighed about 500 pounds. About 35 men took part in the hunt and were served lunch by Mrs. Jack Greaves and Mrs. A. Rolles.

Also on Friday night, Mrs. N. Cooney and Ossie heard a big noise in their pig pasture just about dark and upon running down they came to a freshly killed pig. Seeing the others near the fence, they went to investigate, and suddenly came upon a big black bear. Mrs. Cooney ran back to the house for a rifle, leaving Ossie to try to drive the pigs to the pig-house armed only with a club of wood. When the bear ran in again and took a second pig, about 100 pounds weight, O. Cooney scared off the bear but the pig was torn quite a bit, but saved anyway. The next morning the Napoleon district hunters heard of the incident and as they were now organized and jubilant over their success they offered to join the hunters, which they did, and they soon found track of the bear in H. Woolsey's pasture. About 40 men were now in the chase, which continued all day, but the bear eluded them along the river and swamp.

On Sunday morning early Mr. and Mrs. N. Cooney went to look at their field of barley about half a mile from the house and saw four bears come out of the grain into a bluff on the east side. Leaving the men on guard, Mrs. Cooney drove back to the house and put in several calls to the hunters of the previous day. By noon they were again gathered at the home of Mrs. A. Salm and took up the chase across the old Godson farm. Two more wolves got in the

way and lost their lives, but about 4.30 p.m. they flushed a mother bear and two cubs which were killed just off the road east of Jack Nickols'.

The big bear was killed by N. Cooney, who broke its back, and D. Crawford finished it. One small bear fell to Alwin Gay, who had also killed one of the wolves. The third bear fell to D. Crawford.

---Saskatoon Star-Phoenix

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FISH, AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

CATFISH AND OTHERS

According to Mr. Francis, fish appear to be more plentiful than usual this season in the Torch River. His son, Stanley, age 13, has caught pike, pickerel and suckers on trolling hooks. It was unusual to get suckers on a hook. However, he was unable to land a catfish, which was also eyeing his bait.

SALAMANDER

An unusual specimen was found on August 14, at York Lake, by Miss Betty Marshal of Yorkton. Mr. Clifford Shaw sent it to the Manitoba museum for identification. Following is the reply from L.T.S. Norris-Elye, the director:

"Your specimen arrived in good condition (apart from the missing stern). It is the larval stage of the Devil's Lake Salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum diabolii*). When I first saw it I thought it was *Necturus*, possibly the first authentic specimen for the Province.

You may be rather surprised at the size of this larval form, as I was some years ago; it is quite common for these salamanders to metamorphose completely at two-thirds this size and for the larval forms to almost equal in size those of the largest adults.

If you have any friends in the country South and South-east of Saskatoon, it would be worth while to get them to look out for *Ambystoma jeffersonianum*, as Dr. Rawson of the Zoology Department of the University wrote Mrs. Priestly years ago that he knew of several such records. This is very surprising, as in Manitoba its range seems to be confined to the extreme South-east part of the Province.

TOAD

We wonder how many of our readers are acquainted with the Western Spadefoot Toad. Mr. Fred Bard, Director of the provincial museum, found a specimen this summer at Big Muddy Lake and brought it to the museum.

It is a small toad, about two inches in length. The eyes are large and prominent and the pupil of the eye forms a vertical rather than a horizontal slit. Another distinguishing characteristic is a black spur on the hind foot. The toad is brown in color with four light-coloured stripes from head to thighs. Small warts on the upper surfaces are dark brown.

The Spadefoot Toad is one of the least commonly seen of our tailless amphibians, since it spends a great deal of its time underground, emerging only at night. When disturbed on loose soil the toad crouches down, then with a shuffling motion of the hind legs, with the aid of its spurs, quickly digs itself out of sight.

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SNAKES

One of the largest Bull Snakes to be caught in Saskatchewan was brought to the Provincial Museum this spring by G.A. Carnie of Regina.

Mr. Carnie caught this snake at Estevan. It is 72 inches long and weighed 3 pounds, 7 ounces. It is now beautifully mounted and soon will be on display at the museum.

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On July 14th last, Albert Swanston, of the museum staff, caught a snake about twelve miles west of Gibbs, which answers a question of much interest. It was a Garter Snake, 37 and a half inches in length. The remarkable thing about it, however, was that when it was being prepared for mounting, 44 young were removed from its body. It does not lay eggs.

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PLANT SECTION

A Sunflower Freak

From Grenfell comes one of the most peculiar flower heads that we have ever seen. It is a double-decker wild sunflower. The upper flowerhead is borne on a distinct stem which protrudes through the very centre of the lower and larger head. The specimen was found by Mrs. John Hubbard's daughter, Elizabeth. It was growing near a dugout on the farm.



Columbines and Roses

While Mr. Francis was at Fishing Lake he noted many wild native columbines growing just a few yards from the shore. There also, on the banks, were wild roses in profusion, varying in color from deep red to pale pink. Fireweed, also was in full bloom there, July 4th.

Four years ago Mr. Francis found a pure yellow Western Lily. He and his family have watched it with interest ever since. This summer it bloomed again for the second time.

Jackpines, Native Maples and Conservation

TORCH RIVER -- C. Stuart Francis

"While on a recent trip to Fishing Lakes and the Narrow Hills, I could not help but observe the change in the appearance of some of the country travelled through since I was last there thirteen years ago. One stretch of the old Fishing Lake trail was mostly covered with small fire-killed Jackpine and was nearly bare of green trees more than one to two feet high. Now the fallen fire-killed trees have nearly all rotted away and disintegrated into the topsoil, while the young Jackpines have grown into a dense stand of fine trees, eight to twelve or more feet high. This gives a very good example of how nature quickly rebuilds its forests and, at the same time, rebuilds the soil below which has been damaged by earlier forest fires.

I also noticed on the return trip from the lakes, over the new west road, that more than one small forest fire had apparently been started by careless smokers or campers. Fortunately, in each case, the area burned was only a few acres before it had been extinguished. However, these fires appear to have been started adjacent to the roadway and were not in a area of farm settlement, therefore it is apparent that more effort must be made to educate the travelling public regarding the dangers of carelessly handled matches, campfires, etc.

It is quite interesting to note that there are quite large stands of native Manitoba Maple along the Torch River, above the confluence of White Gull, Caribou and Falling Horse Creeks. These stands of maple are quite extensive, appearing to be sometimes a mile or so long and a quarter mile wide. I have also noted fine stands of maples along the Missipuskiou River, still further north than the Torch River. It would be interesting to know just how far north native Manitoba Maples grow in Saskatchewan.

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We are very pleased to get another contribution from Mr. Arch C. Budd, botanist at the Swift Current Experimental Station. This time he describes the Anemonies of Saskatchewan. His series of articles is very instructive and will prove a great help to all interested in our flora. Unfortunately, due to rush of work, he was unable to illustrate these flowers.

Mr. Budd has had a very happy summer - one that will make all who love the out-of-doors, the mountains, the forests and the wild flowers, envious. He has been loaned as a botanist to the survey part of the Eastern Rockies Forest Conservation Board and worked in the area between the Crows'-Nest Pass and Waterton Park, from July 3rd to August 15th.

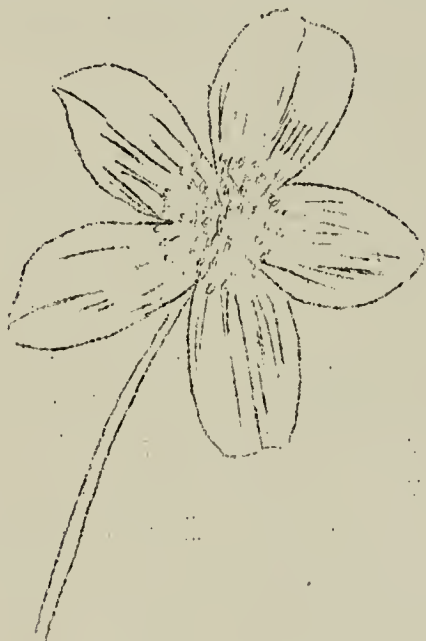
The party was first camped in tents on the banks of the Carbondale Creek in the Crows'-nest Park area. This is the heart of the grizzly bear country, and naturally our Botanist was a bit nervous. We can imagine his glancing furtively this way and that before retrieving a rare specimen on the bank of a brook in the thickets and hastily returning to his companions and safety.

Many of the mountain flowers were in spring-like bloom and Mr. Budd was fortunate in being able to collect hundreds of them in the prime of their beauty.

The Anemones or Wind-flowers of Saskatchewan

Arch C. Budd

In our Province we have four species of Anemone, three of which are quite plentiful and one very rare. Anemones, which belong to the Buttercup family, (Ranunculaceae), generally have five petal-like, coloured sepals but no true petals. They also have numerous stamens and pistils, and the fruit is a cylindrical or a globular head with many small single-seeded achenes. Part way up the flowering stalks is a whorl of bracts which generally resemble small leaves. The true leaves are deeply palmately dissected or divided and are all basal and long stalked.



The commonest species, the Canada Anemone (A. canadensis L.) has white flowers from 1 to 1 and a quarter inches in diameter and is found throughout the entire Province, even on open prairie, where it shelters in the edge of snowberry clumps or in buffalo wallows and coulees, generally in large masses.

The Long-fruited Anemone (A. cylindrica A. Gray) has greenish-white flowers about one-half to three-quarter inch across and the fruiting head is long, cylindrical and very woolly. This species is fairly common in moist situations throughout most of the Province.

Saskatchewan's only pink anemone is the Cut-leaved Anemone, (A. multifida Poir. var. hudsoniana DC.) or (A. globosa Nutt) which generally bears purplish-red flowers from one-half to five-eighths of an inch across. Occasionally specimens are found with flowers yellowish-green in colour. The fruiting heads are very woolly and are globular in shape. This species is fairly common in moist spots throughout the prairie.

The Tall Anemone (A. virginiana L.) grows from 2 to 3 feet in height (the other species being generally from 1 to 2 feet) and bears greenish-white flowers about three-quarter of an inch across. This rare species was found near Yorkton by our late president, Mrs. I.M. Priestly, but has not apparently been otherwise recorded for the Province.

The following key may aid in distinguishing the Anemones.

1. Fruiting heads not densely woolly. A. canadensis.
- Fruiting heads densely woolly. 2.
2. Flowers reddish-purple; fruiting heads globular. A. multifida.
- Flowers greenish-white; fruiting heads oblong or cylindrical. 3.
3. Fruiting heads elongated and cylindrical; plants from 6 to 20 inches in height. A. cylindrica.
- Fruiting heads rounded or oblong; plants tall, from 24 to 36 inches high. A. virginiana.

Our Crocus-Anemone differs from the true Anemones by bearing a long, persistent, feathery or plumose style attached to each achene, but was at one time classified as an Anemone. The common name of Windflower arises from the

ease with which the sepals of Anemones are blown off by the wind. The Greek mythology tells us of a beautiful nymph, Anemone, who was loved by the god of the west wind, Zephyrus, and was turned, by the jealous goddess Flora into a flower which thus bears her name.

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In Lieu of Flowers

Iris Tickner

As a substitute for flowers, once the fall comes, leaves, especially the copper beech variety, can be preserved and kept for months. They should be picked when they begin to change color and dipped in crude glycerine. Then they are laid away for a few weeks in a dry, dark place and when brought out once more, they are glossy and bright and will retain their freshness throughout the winter months. My mother used to lay them under the carpet after they had been dipped, and it was always a pleasant surprise to me to see them emerge none the worse for their period of flattening. This also is the time of the year to gather weeds, bulrushes, etc., and paint them for winter bouquets.

---Toronto Star Weekly.

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FOSSILS

While digging a basement, this summer, Carl Runyan, of Punnichy, found a stone containing the fossilized remains of a large worm, together with the impressions of two tiny shell-like objects in the shape of fans. This rock splits easily into layers. It would found five feet below the surface. He would like some information as to what these objects are.

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Only a geological expert could tell what types of marine life these were, and how many million years ago they were deposited on the ancient ocean floor which at one time covered what is now the prairies of Saskatchewan.

When today, we dig down into the old ocean bed we may find many buried evidences of former life. If we could collect enough of these fossils and be able to read the story that is hidden with them, we would be in possession of a record of the ages and a knowledge of the world's ancient past.

Probably the most common fossils are like those you have found; the fossils of snails, clams and other animals, the bodies of which were covered with shells or protected by other hard coverings. These fossils were formed as follows: as the plant and animal bodies decayed, mineral matter from the water was deposited in their tissues. The mineral matter which thus was slowly deposited took the form of the plant or animal parts it replaced. Sometimes the deposited minerals took the places of even the softer structures, thus preserving the entire bodies of plants and animals.

Cecropia Moth

August is the month when the larva of the Cecropia Moth passes into the pupal stage. So large and so striking is the larva that the finder nearly always tries to learn its name. It is three or more inches in length and almost as large in diameter as a man's thumb. It is green and blue in color and is conspicuously marked with orange and yellow.

One of these was recently brought to me for identification, the finder not knowing about my ignorance in respect to such matters. However, I happened to know this one. I put it into a small jar, with the intention of taking it to the museum the next morning, but instead of the larva, the jar was nearly filled with the cocoon at breakfast time. How that insect could have accomplished such a task in a few hours is more than I can imagine. The cocoon is a finely woven and irregularly shaped sack, much larger than the pupa. It is light brown in color. This one was neatly fastened with numerous long hairs to the side of the jar and the leaves that were in it. I have put it in the garage and expect the moth to emerge next May. From past observations I know what a pleasant experience it is to observe this emergence.

--- L.T. Carmichael

An annual meeting will be held in Regina College and in the Provincial Museum of Natural History on October 21 and 22, 1949. Wildlife films will be shown and the whole make-up and policy of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society and the "BLUE JAY" will be discussed. More complete programs may be obtained upon inquiry. Please let us know if you can come to Regina for these days.

